

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Costa Rica

Post: San Jose

16th. Americas Food and Beverage Show

Report Categories:

CSSF Activity Report

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Report Highlights:

The Americas Food and Beverage Show continues to present a good range of products oriented towards the Latin American market.

General Information:

AMERICAS FOOD AND BEVERAGE SHOW September 24-25, 2012

OVERVIEW

From September 24-25, 2012 the Agricultural Marketing Specialist from OAA San Jose, escorted a delegation of Costa Rican participants to the 16th Annual Americas Food and Beverage Show, held at the Miami Beach Convention Center. The show was a great opportunity for both U.S. exhibitors and the Costa Rican food retail and food service sector representatives to meet, make contacts, and learn about new products to import into Costa Rica.

The USMEF, USAPEEC and the USDEC joined efforts to host a cocktail for Latin American importers of meat, dairy and poultry products. That activity gave the importers and the Marketing Specialist the opportunity to meet with contacts from the United States as well as those from other countries.

The Costa Rican delegation consisted of importers and exporters ranging from general managers to marketing and purchasing managers.

As in the past, the Miami World Trade Center and NASDA offered three nights lodging and the base fare of the plane ticket to three key contacts of the office. Also as part of that program, NASDA arranged one-on-one meetings for Costa Rican VIP invitees with some of the exhibitors interested in exporting to Costa Rica. These meetings were of great benefit to the VIPs since they had time to prepare for the meetings, view some of the products in advance and obtain complete information on samples, sizing, prices, and shipping duties.

Thanks to the new opportunities created by the CAFTA-DR agreement, Costa Rican importers were looking to use this food show to develop new business contacts, diversify their offerings and maximize their client portfolio by building new product lines.

The show organizers and FAS held a closing meeting on Tuesday, September 25th for all the FAS Foreign Service Nationals (FSNs) leading delegations from each attending country (Venezuela, Nicaragua, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Argentina, Jamaica, ATO Miami and the Caribbean). During this meeting the FSNs provided feedback about the show setting, number of exhibitors, logistics, type of products, one-on-one meetings, etc. The general opinion is that the show is improving year by year. It is not a huge show, but there is a good range of products for the Latin American market. Several of the participants mentioned that they made excellent contacts, found what they needed and are starting negotiations with some of the exhibitors.

Although there is not yet complete information regarding on-site purchasing, we received some information on beginning negotiations between Costa Rican importers and U.S. exporters. Organizers are looking forward to visiting some of the Latin American countries to more efficiently promote this event. Post is willing to support that visit.

GENERAL COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE SHOW:

This year, in terms of organization and communication with posts, the Miami Convention Center and organizers of the show were very efficient. Canada participated with a national pavilion, as well as Brazil, Argentina, Panama and Jamaica.

One highly positive and promising development from the show was the willingness of American exporters to

work with the needs of Costa Rican importers. While many Costa Rican importers are interested in ordering a variety of products from various American companies, they have a unique issue when it comes to ordering and shipping.

Because of the size of Costa Rica and the smaller size of its market, many Costa Rican importers are interested in importing the right amount of product to fit their needs. For example, importers may not want several large containers of an item immediately, especially if they are bringing a new product to Costa Rica. They prefer smaller amounts so they can market test and position the new product within Costa Rica, and also measure sales of the product before placing larger orders. Not only do Costa Rican importers prefer to customize the amounts of product they order, but for smaller orders, they prefer to have these orders sent to a hub in Miami to be consolidated and shipped to Costa Rica in as few containers as possible. This helps maximize their efficiency and reduce costs.

Therefore, given these particular needs, many Costa Rican importers were pleased to meet a number of medium-size American companies exhibiting at the Food and Beverage show who are willing to work with their requests regarding product ordering.

CONCLUSION

The variety of products on display was greatly expanded as well. There was steady traffic for two days which was indicative of the high interest of visitors in the pavilion's product offerings. For the FAS San Jose FSN attending this show, it was a great opportunity to touch base with cooperators, state groups and meet new U.S. food and beverage suppliers. Post is working with the companies that attended from Costa Rica to learn about their purchases that result in U.S. exports to Costa Rica. Due to the lengthy product registration process, it can take months after initial negotiations before a product may enter the country. Post will report new export successes that resulted from this event as soon as possible.

COST

Total expenses for the San José FSN to attend this event - \$ 1,494

LIST OF COSTA RICAN PARTICIPANTS REGISTERED THROUGH FAS OFFICE

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